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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0504
RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 000543

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF S/E WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG
NSC FOR HUDSON AND PITTMAN
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: UNMIS GRANTED 14-DAY AUTHORITY TO PATROL OUTSIDE OF ABYEI

REFS: A. KHARTOUM 508
[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 524

[1](#)1. (U) On April 7, UNMIS Force Commander LTG Jasbiri Singh Lidder announced that both Sudan's National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM) have granted UNMIS Authority to patrol freely within the Abyei area for 14 days. Previously, UNMIS had been restricted to the town of Abyei by both SAF and SPLA checkpoints on its outskirts and unable to patrol the surrounding countryside. UNMIS now will be able to monitor and report on any troop deployments throughout the Abyei region.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Tensions have been rising in Abyei since the SPLM's unilateral appointment of Edward Lino as SPLM Coordinator/Abyei "Administrator." They sharply increased when Lino arrived in town with a company-sized SPLA force and delivered an anti-Miseriyya address to the Ngok Dinka community. They escalated further when the SAF responded by deploying a reportedly-330 man force to the town on March 31. There have been widespread, but unconfirmed, rumors of an even larger SAF troop buildup to the north of Abyei town and additional SPLA units moving into the area.

[1](#)3. (SBU) COMMENT: During his April 2-3 visit to Abyei (refs), a variety of contacts told CDA Fernandez that the greatest immediate threat of violence stemmed from unsubstantiated rumors of ethnic violence following the SPLA and SAF troop deployments and the growing anxiety among the population. It is too early to determine whether UNMIS will have the open access LTG Lidder claims, since local commanders often restrict movement despite clearances given in Khartoum. However if UNMIS is able to exercise its new authority, even if only temporarily, it will provide a new measure of transparency to the region's security situation and a check on public hysteria. This will be even more significant if the two sides fail on April 9, once again, to achieve a compromise on the troubled region's borders.

FERNANDEZ